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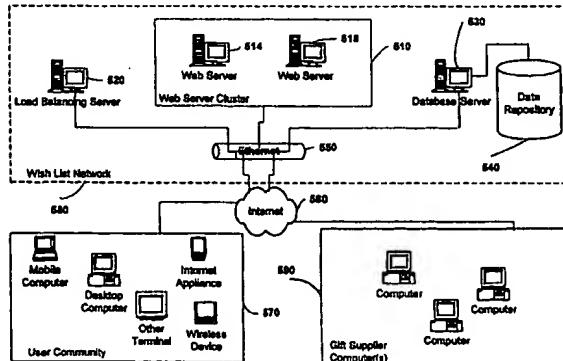
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(54) Title: ON-LINE GIFT REGISTRY SYSTEM AND METHOD



(57) Abstract

The present invention provides a method and system for providing on-line gift registry services. Accordingly, a gift registry system and method is disclosed allowing an end user utilizing a user terminal having an input device and a display to register for gifts or to purchase an item from the registry of a registrant. A typical system embodying the invention includes a registry database system for storing registry records and one or more processors communicating with user terminals, gift supplier computers associated with multiple gift suppliers, and the registry database. Each registry record correlates identification information for a selected registrant with at least one gift item record. Such a system receives identification information from an input device of a user terminal. Then, a list of gift item records that are correlated with the received identification information in the registry database is generated. If any such records are found, the generated list is displayed on a display of the user terminal. If the user is a registrant, the registrant may modify the generated list, and the registry is updated. If the user is a new registrant, the registrant may create a new list, and save the created list in the registry. If the user is a gift purchaser, a determination is made as to whether a purchase has occurred with respect to a gift item record selected from the generated list. Finally, upon determining that the purchase has occurred, the registry database system is updated to reflect the purchase.

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ON-LINE GIFT REGISTRY SYSTEM AND METHOD

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED PATENT APPLICATION

This application claims the benefit, pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §119(e), of 5 applicants' provisional U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 60/114,281, filed December 30, 1998, entitled "INTERNET GIFT REGISTRY".

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

1. FIELD OF INVENTION

10 The present invention relates to a system and method for gift registry that is on-line. More specifically, the present invention relates to a system and method allowing a registrant to register on-line for gifts from disparate gift suppliers and allowing a purchaser to purchase on-line a gift on the registry of a registrant.

15 2. DESCRIPTION OF PRIOR ART

When a couple marries, they usually go to stores and choose items that they would like to receive as gifts. The store registers the name of the couple and the gifts that they want. The register is often a list identified by the couple's name. The list is either kept electronically or by hand. There is also a gift-registry system using a 20 portable bar code scanner and a computer system as disclosed in U.S. Patent No. 5,754,981.

When a potential gift-purchaser goes into the store and asks whether the couple has gifts registered, the store shows the list to the person so the person may select for purchase gifts that were chosen by the couple.

25 These lists, or bridal registries, provide a service for couples to be married as well as their friends. In addition, these registries create goodwill for the store and also a source of business.

There is a need however, to expand the gift-registry system beyond gifts for 30 weddings. There are many gift-giving occasions throughout the year such as birthdays, Christmas, graduations, baby showers, etc., for which an easily accessible wish list would be a convenient service to both the gift purchaser and the gift recipient. In

addition, this accessible wish list would also be a vast source of goodwill and business to many stores.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

5 The present invention is directed to a fully integrated and aggregated on-line gift registry. A user may access the system to create or edit a wish list as a registrant. A user may also access the system on-line as a shopper and browse another user's aggregated gift registry for gift shopping from a network of on-line companies. Registrants in the system may be people or other entities such as companies, 10 associations, etc.

A user may electronically review a friend's wish list, may review the gifts listed in the wish list, and may select a gift for purchase. Upon selection, the system may automatically issue instructions to the gift supplying company (gift supplier) and update the wish list to reflect the purchase. In other embodiments, the system may 15 guide the user to a Web site associated with the gift supplier, or to a specific page on the gift supplier's Web site, where the user may purchase the selected gift item. The wish list may be updated via a notification of purchase; the notification may be received from the user, the gift supplier or some other appropriate source.

A typical gift registry system according to the present invention allows an end 20 user utilizing a user terminal having an input device and a display to display a list of gift items corresponding to a selected gift registry registrant, to select a gift item from the displayed list and to purchase the selected gift item from a gift supplier. Such a system includes a registry database system for storing registry records, each registry record correlating identification information for a selected registrant with at least one 25 gift item record and at least one processor communicating with the registry database, the end user terminal and at least one gift supplier computer providing gift item records associated with gift suppliers. The processor(s) receive identification from an input device of the user terminal. From this identification information, a list of gift items is generated via the registry database, which is then displayed on the display of the user terminal. The processor(s) determine whether a purchase has occurred with respect to a 30

gift item record selected from the displayed list, and upon determining that a purchase has occurred, updating the registry database to reflect the purchase.

The gift registry system according to the present invention further allows an end user utilizing a user terminal having an input device and a display to modify a list of gift items available from a plurality of gift suppliers as an on-line gift registry registrant, where modifying a list may mean creating, deleting or altering a list. In this instance, a user is an existing or new registrant. Such a system would utilize a gift registry database as well as one or more processors communicating with the registry database, the end user terminal and at least one gift supplier computer providing gift item records associated with gift suppliers. The processor(s) receive identification from an input device of the user terminal. A list of gift item records correlated to the received identification is generated and displayed on the user terminal. The processor(s) modify the list of gift item records in accordance with instructions received from the user terminal, and update the registry database accordingly.

The above and other objects and advantages of the present invention will become more readily apparent when reference is made to the following description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a diagram of a hardware architecture that could be used to implement the present invention.

FIG. 2 is a top-level architectural diagram of pages in a typical wish list enabled Web site implementing a gift registry according to the present invention.

FIG. 3 is a flow chart of the process performed by a current or prospective registrant upon entry to the wish list enabled Web site.

FIGs. 4-6 are flow diagrams describing the Create My Wish List process in a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 7 is a flow diagram describing the View / Edit My Wish List process in a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 8 is a flow diagram describing the login process in a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 9 is a flow diagram describing the Add to Wish List process in a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 10 is a flow diagram describing the Wish List Search process in a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

5 FIG. 11 is a flow diagram describing the Make A Purchase process in a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

A preferred embodiment of the invention is now described in detail. Referring 10 to the drawings, like numbers indicate like parts throughout the views. As used in the description herein and throughout the claims that follow, the meaning of "a," "an," and "the" includes plural reference unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. Also, as used in the description herein and throughout the claims that follow, the meaning of "in" includes "in" and "on" unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. The term 15 "user" may refer to either a registrant or a shopper depending upon the context in which it is used; further, the term "user" or "users" may refer to both registrants and shoppers.

A fully integrated aggregated, on-line gift registry, or wish list, system and method are disclosed. A user may access the system on-line and browse a friend or family member's aggregated gift registry for gift shopping from participating 20 companies, gift suppliers. The user may electronically review the wish list, the gifts listed therein, and select a gift for purchase. Upon selection, the system automatically issues an electronic purchase order to the supplying company and updates the wish list to reflect the purchase. An enrolled user may also access the system on-line to construct and edit his or her own wish list(s).

25 A typical hardware and software environment for implementing the present invention will be seen in FIG. 1. The wish list network environment 580 will include a cluster 510 of one or more Web server system 514, 518, a registry database system 530 connected to a data repository 540 such as a fixed disk drive and an optional load-balancing server 520. The registry database system 530 stores in the data repository 30 540 registry records correlating identification information for registrants with gift item

records. The systems would be connected via an Ethernet 550, or other communications network.

The communications network such as Ethernet 550 would also have a connection to the Internet 560 by which end users 570 would utilize the system via user terminals such as user computers, desktop or set-top boxes, wireless devices, Internet appliances or other Internet-enabled device having an input device and an output device. The output device of the typical user terminal will be a visual display; however, "display" as used in this specification and the foregoing claims should not be limited to visual displays but should be understood to encompass other auditory output devices, tactile device or other suitable mechanism for rendering output as will be known to those skilled in the art. Similarly, the input device of the typical user terminal will be a pointing device and/or a keyboard; however, input devices may include a stylus, vocal/noise-based input devices, motion-based input device such as eye-blink sensors or other motion detection device or other suitable mechanism for providing input as will be known to those skilled in the art.

The Web server cluster 510 communicates with the registry database system 530 in this situation via an Ethernet 550 and with a variety of one or more gift supplier computers 590 representing gift suppliers via a communication channel such as the Internet 560. One or more gift suppliers may be associated with a single gift supplier computer.

In a preferred embodiment, the architecture of the system is a 3-tier, client-server architecture. The client tier is represented by Web users who visit the wish list Web site and share a common interface via various Web browsers. The Web servers and supporting framework make up the middle tier. The final tier is the database that holds all user information. The system could be implemented using the hardware and software in the following table:

Item	How Used
Intel Pentium class Servers	Handle load balancing, Web services, and database services.
T-1 Bandwidth	Handles connectivity to the Internet for wish list Web site presence.
Microsoft SQL Server	Database for storing user information.
Active Server Pages (ASP)	Used to dynamically present Web content and database access for users.
SMTP Server	Handles incoming and outgoing email traffic for the system.
Microsoft Windows NT Server	Operating system running on each of the servers.
Microsoft IIS Web Server	Handles incoming Web requests. Submits static HTML responses as well as dynamic ASP responses.
Remote Administration Software	Allows for remote administration to the system servers.
100 Mbit Ethernet	Used for connection between system machines.

Substitute hardware and software options will work equally well to support the functionality described above. For instance, a Netscape server could be used to handle 5 incoming Web requests. A Cold Fusion server in conjunction with Cold Fusion Web pages could be used as an alternative to ASP pages. Other alternative hardware and software as will be known to those skilled in the art may be used within the scope of the present invention.

A variety of database organizational structures may be used to implement the 10 present invention. The database may be implemented using any of the various models generally known to those skilled in the art such as relational, object-oriented, etc. In a preferred embodiment, the database is organized under the relational model. This organization can be implemented with any suitable database package such as Oracle, Access, etc. In a preferred embodiment, the database is implemented using a Microsoft

SQL server. The database architecture may be scaled through incorporating multiple database servers and/or data repositories.

The following table outlines the relational database tables used in a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

Table	Description
SEARCH_RESULTS	Contains data results from searches performed. Used for caching abilities.
SEARCH_CRITERIA	Contains search criteria used in searches by visitors. Used for caching abilities and logging.
EVENT	Contains predefined events and holidays.
WISHLIST	Contains registration information for a registrants wish list.
WISHLIST_PURCHASE	Contains information about purchase transactions for items in a user's wish list.
WISHLIST_EVENT	Contains a list of special events for a user's wish list. Can be predefined or custom entries.
WISHLIST_ITEM	Contains a list of items in a user's wish list with price, retailer, quantities, etc.
WISHLIST_RECIPIENT	Contains the email addresses and names of friends and family for wish list-related message exchange.
WISHLIST_RETAILERS	Contains a list of retailers for a user's wish list. Can be either predefined or custom entries.

The following components are used to provide Internet users with the ability to build and maintain a personal wish list, access friends' or family members' wish lists, and make purchases through Internet commerce-enabled retail partners. The components include the following:

- 10 • Create My Wish List (wish list creation)
- View/Edit My Wish List (wish list login and edit)
- Add to Wish List (wish list item additions by retailer integration)
- Wish List Search (finding a registrant's wish list)

- Make a Purchase (conducting a purchase transaction)
Each of the components is accessible through a wish list enabled Web site.
Wish list enabled Web sites may be Web sites that specializes in wish list management
or gift supplier e-commerce Web sites that allow users to add products or services to
5 wish lists. Individual registrants may also establish access to their respective wish lists
via links from the their personal home pages.

10 FIG. 2 depicts the architectural page layout of a typical wish list enabled Web
site implementing a gift register according to the present invention. The user enters a
Wish List Options page 105. From the Wish List Options page 105, the user can select
the following pages: Create My Wish List 110, View / Edit My Wish List 120, Add to
15 Wish List 130, and Wish List Search 140.

15 From the Create My Wish List page 110, the user views the Enter Registrant
Information page 115, from which the user enters his or her registration information to
create a wish list. Once the user has entered the requested registration information, the
user proceeds to a Confirmation page 117. The wish list creation process is more fully
described below.

20 Viewing a wish list includes alteration of the data within the wish list or
deletion of the wish list in its entirety. If the registrant wishes to view or edit his or her
existing wish list, page 120, the wish list must be found prior to the occurrence of such
an event through a Login page 121. After which, the user's wish list is displayed in its
entirety, page 122, with full edit capabilities. An existing wish list may be deleted
25 through a Delete Wish List page 127. A typical deletion process is described in more
detail below with reference to FIG. 7.

25 The View / Edit My Wish List page 120 may also allow the performance of
other editing type functions such as modifying gift items 123, modifying events
information 124, modifying registrant information 125 and modifying the names and
email addresses of wish list recipients 126. A variety of pages may be used to allow
such functionality.

30 From the Wish List Options page 105, the user can search for a friend or family
member's (or other entity's) wish list, page 140. After submitting the appropriate
search criteria, a Search Result page 142 is presented.

The user may select to view a Registry Details page 143. From the Registry Details page 143, the user may select to purchase a gift item from the registry via a Purchase Gift Item page 144. If the user does not want to make an on-line purchase, the user may select to view an Other Purchase Methods page 145, which provides 5 instructions for completing a non-on-line purchase of the selected item.

When a new wish list user visits a wish list enabled Web site, he or she can choose to create a personal wish list to add gift items to, page 130. The new user chooses this option directly, by selecting a button or menu function that has phrasing akin to "Create a Wish List," or indirectly, by selecting an "Add to Wish List" button or 10 menu option situated alongside or within an e-commerce site's on-line shopping catalog pages.

After the wish list has been created, the registrant's friends and family members can then visit the wish list enabled Web site, locate the wish list, and purchase items from the wish list. If the user needs to modify his or her wish list, a login procedure 15 allows access to make changes. The registrant's choices to either create a new wish list, view/edit his or her existing wish list, add gift items to the existing wish list, and perform a wish list search are shown in the process flow in FIG. 3.

By going to the wish list enabled Web site 410, the registrant is presented with a menu including these choices 415. The user chooses 420 whether to create a new wish 20 list 428, view/edit his or her existing wish list 424, add gift items to the existing wish list 430, or perform a wish list search 432. If the user chooses to create a new wish list, he or she is shown an entry screen for the create process 1000 as more fully described below and as seen in FIG. 5.

If the user chooses to view/edit his or her existing wish list, the user will be 25 presented with the login process 1800 as seen in FIG. 8 and described in more detail below. Upon logging in, the user will enter the view/edit wish list process 1700 as more fully described below with reference to FIG. 7.

If the user chooses to add gift items to his or her existing wish list, the user will be presented with the login process 1800 as seen in FIG. 8 and described in more detail 30 below. Upon logging in, the user will enter the add to wish list process 1900 as more fully described below and as seen in FIG. 9.

If the user chooses to perform a wish list search, the user will be presented with the wish list search process 2000 as seen in FIG. 10 and described in more detail below.

Wish List Creation

5 The ability to create a new wish list, Create My Wish List, involves gathering information from the user. The wish list creation process obtains the following registration information from a prospective registrant:

- Registrant Information - name, gender, and email address
- Shipping Information – Registrant's telephone number, address, city, state, 10 postal code, country
- Event Information – Registrant's birth date, list of holidays and other events that the registrant celebrates
- Notify Information - list of names and email addresses of friends and family members that the registrant wants to notify about his or her wish list
- 15 • Password - a password for security, so that only the registrant will be able to modify his or her wish list.

When all information has been entered, the registrant's information is stored in the database. The flow diagrams for the wish list creation processes can be seen in FIGs. 4-6.

20 The user can choose to create a wish list in one of two ways. First, he or she can come to a wish list enabled Web site and select a Create My Wish List option, as seen in FIG. 3. Or second, he or she can create a wish list while browsing within a wish list enabled e-commerce site's on-line catalog. The user does this by selecting an "Add to Wish List" button or menu option, situated alongside or within a gift supplier's 25 on-line catalog 910, as seen in FIG. 4.

When the user has selected the "Add to Wish List" button or menu option 920 at a gift supplier site, the wish list system checks the user's wish list registration status 940. If the user is already a wish list registrant 955, the wish list system will proceed to let the user add the gift item to his or her wish list. If the user does not have a pre-existing wish list 950, the wish list system will let the user register and create one. 30 When the user adds the gift item to his or her existing wish list, the user will be

presented with the login process 1800, as seen in FIG. 8. After logging in, the user will enter the Add to Wish List process 1900 as more fully described below with reference to FIG. 9.

5 If the user chooses to create a new wish list, the user will be taken to the first step in the create process 1000, gathering registration information as displayed in FIG. 5.

From the registration screen 1010, the user enters his or her registration information 1020. The user may choose 1030 to cancel or continue. If the user chooses to cancel, he or she will be returned to the Wish List Options screen 415. 10 However, if the user originated from a gift supplier site, choosing cancel will take the user back to the site's catalog page 910. If after entering the registration information the user chooses to continue, the wish list system will check to see if the login information exists for any pre-existing wish list registrants 1050. If yes, the user will be prompted to enter different login information 1060 and try again 1020. If no, the 15 creation process will continue with the confirmation process 1600 as shown in FIG. 6.

A confirmation page will be presented to the user 1610. The registration information will be saved. The registration data entered by the registrant will be stored in a database 1630. A notification email will be sent to each of the registrant's friend and family members—whom the user listed during registration as wishlist recipients—to alert them about the presence of the registrant's wish list 1660. 20

The wish list system checks to see the location from which the registrant originated 1665. If the new registrant originated from a gift supplier catalog page 910—by having selected an “Add to Wish List” button or menu option—the registrant can now add the gift item to his or her wish list by proceeding with the Add to Wish 25 List process, 1900, as shown in FIG. 9.

If the new registrant originated from a wish list enabled Web site, the registrant may now choose 1670 to return to the Wish List Options screen 415 or follow links to shop at any of the gift suppliers listed on the wish list enabled Web site 1680.

View / Edit My Wish List

The View / Edit My Wish List process is displayed in FIG. 7. First, the wish list page is shown 1710 giving the registrant a variety of choices 1720. The registrant may choose to delete the wish list in its entirety, perform an edit operation on the

5 different sections that comprise the wish list, or add new gift items to the wish list. The term "modify" with respect to a wish list encompasses adding gift items to a wish list, performing an edit function on a wish list, or deleting a wish list. The registrant may not modify a wish list until the registrant has successfully logged in through the login process 1800 or has implicitly logged in by creating a new wish list 1000.

10 To modify his or her wish list, the registrant must login using the login process 1800 as seen in FIG. 8. In this process, the registrant sees a login page allowing login entry 1810. The registrant enters his or her login information 1815 and makes a selection 1820. If the registrant selects to cancel 1822, the registrant is sent back to the location from which he or she originated 415 or 910. If the registrant selects to 15 continue, the system looks up the login information in the database 1840. If no entry is found in the database, an error page is displayed with instructions for obtaining the login information 1870. At this point, the registrant may make another login attempt 1810.

Upon successful login, the registrant returns to the View / Edit Wish List 20 process 1700. The registrant is presented with an editable version of his or her wish list. The registrant may now delete or modify the existing wish list.

If the registrant selects to delete the wish list, the system will request that the registrant confirm this choice 1730. If the registrant rejects the confirmation, the registrant is returned to the wish list 1710 allowing the registrant to make another 25 choice 1720. If the registrant confirms the deletion, the wish list information is deleted from the database 1740. The registrant is notified of the completed deletion 1745.

If the registrant selects to edit the existing wish list, he or she may select from a variety of editing functions 1750. The editing functionality for a wish list is broken up into the following sections:

30 • Edit gift items 1760

- **Edit events 1770**
- **Edit registrant information 1780**
- **Edit wish list recipients 1790**

Each section has edit operations that act on the information in that section.

5 These operations are discussed under the appropriate sections below.

Gift items section 1760

The registrant has the ability to perform the following operations from this section:

10 1. delete an existing gift item from the wish list
2. change descriptive details about the gift item, such as preferred quantity, size, color, model.

Events section 1770

The registrant has the ability to perform the following operations from this section:

15 1. delete an existing event from the wish list
2. change event details, such as the event date or name of the event
3. add a new event

Registrant information section 1780

20 The registrant has the ability to perform the following operations from this section:

1. change registrant contact information, such as registrant name, shipping address, email address
2. change password

Wish list recipients section 1790

25 The registrant has the ability to perform the following operations from this section:

1. delete an existing wish list notification recipient
2. change an existing recipient's name or email address

3. add a new wish list notification recipient
4. Send email to recipients

Add to Wish List

5 The Add to Wish List functionality provides integration of the wish list system with a gift supplier's e-commerce system. This is very beneficial to the registrant. It gives the registrant the ability to add gift items to his or her wish list while browsing a gift supplier's on-line catalog. With reference to FIG. 4, a registrant performs this function by visiting a gift supplier's on-line catalog, and identifying a desired a gift
10 item from one of the gift supplier's item pages 910. The registrant adds the gift item to his or her wish list by selecting the "Add to Wish List" button or menu option associated with the gift item 920. When the user has selected the "Add to Wish List" button or menu option 920 at a gift supplier site, the wish list system checks the user's wish list registration status 940. If the user is already a wish list registrant 955, the
15 wish list system will proceed to let the user add the gift item to his or her wish list. If the user doesn't have a pre-existing wish list, the wish list system will let the user register and create one, 950.

When the registrant chooses to add the item to his or her existing wish list, the registrant will be presented with the login process 1800 as seen in FIG. 8. After
20 logging in, the user will enter the Add to Wish List process 1900 with referenced to FIG 9.

As seen in FIG. 9, The wish list system posts the gift item information, such as item name, item photograph, item description, model number, color options, size options, to a Wish List Gift Item Add form 1930.

25 The registrant uses the Wish List Gift Item Add form to optionally enter personal preferential information associated with the gift item 1940, such as the desired quantity of the gift item, color, model, and size preferences, and the registrant event (i.e., birthday, wedding, Christmas, etc.) that the registrant would like to associate with the gift item. The registrant can choose 1954 to cancel this process and return to the
30 gift supplier catalog 910, or continue the process of adding the gift item to his or her wish list. When the registrant adds the gift item, the gift item data is saved to the

database 1970. The registrant may then choose 1980 to review his or her wish list through the view/edit process 1700 or return to the gift supplier catalog to continue shopping 910.

5 Wish List Search

The process flow for this functionality 2000 is seen in FIG. 10. When a visitor visits a wish list enabled Web site and wants to find out what a registrant wants for an upcoming event, he or she can perform a search for that registrant's wish list. By entering search criteria 2015 such as the registrant's full or partial name or email address and submitting the criteria to the wish list system 2020, the visitor is presented with a list of possible matches found by the system.

If no matches occur, the user is given the option to either try another search 2025 or cancel and return to the Wish List Options screen 415. If matches are found, the matches are displayed on the user's terminal 2030. If the desired registrant wish list 15 is not among the matches found, the user may choose 2025 to either try another search or cancel and return to the Wish List Options Screen 415. If the desired registrant wish list is found among the matches, the user may select the wish list for display 2035. The user will be presented with the list of gift items that were selected by the registrant. From this listing, the user can choose to make a gift item purchase by entering the 20 Make a Purchase process 2100 as referenced in FIG 11.

Make a Purchase

Once a shopper finds the wish list he or she is looking for, the wish list system allows the shopper to make purchases via the gift supplier's purchase interface. A 25 shopper selects the item he or she wishes to purchase from the wish list, enters the quantity to purchase, and then chooses the "buy" button or menu option. The wish list system may transmit information about the wish list in order to provide the gift supplier site with shipping information and other registrant data via a suitable mechanism such as an HTTP POST request, sending a facsimile purchase order, etc.

30 Once the shopper has completed the purchase process via the gift supplier site, the gift supplier site will transmit confirmation information back to the wish list system

via a suitable transmission mechanism such as email, HTTP POST, facsimile transmission. The wish list system saves this information in the database and updates the purchase quantity of the registrant's gift item. At this point, the shopper will once again be shown the registrant's wish list with the updated purchase quantities reflected 5 on the wish list. Since not all gift supplier e-commerce sites will have the capability to send purchase confirmations to the wish list system, the shopper may, in one embodiment, have the capability to manually update the purchase quantities on the wish list so as to minimize future, duplicate purchases from being made.

As with the Add to Wish List functionality as seen in FIG. 9, the Make a 10 Purchase process may provide integration between the wish list system and gift supplier's e-commerce system.

The flow diagrams for a typical wish list purchase process can be seen in FIG. 11. The shopper views the registrant wish list 2203 and selects a gift item from the 15 wish list to purchase 2205. Detailed information concerning the gift item is presented to the shopper 2210, and the shopper is given an opportunity to select item quantity to purchase 2215. If the shopper selects to proceed with the purchase by pressing a "buy" button or menu option 2220, an interface to the gift item's associated gift supplier e-commerce site is displayed 2225.

At this point, the shopper may choose 2230 to cancel the purchase transaction in 20 which case the shopper is returned to the registrant's wish list 2203. Or, the shopper may select to complete the purchase transaction 2245. The purchase confirmation information is transmitted and stored in the database 2260, item quantities are updated in the database 2265 and the shopper is returned to the registrant's wish list 2203. The shopper will see that gift item quantity has been updated to reflect the purchase made. 25 If the gift item quantity is not updated, or is incorrect, the shopper can manually update the quantity to reflect the purchase.

In a typical situation, users of a wish list according to the present invention can 30 be categorized into two groups: registrants and shoppers. These groups are not necessarily disjoint. A registrant may enter the system to shop for an item for a second registrant; in which case, the first registrant would be classified as a shopper in this situation.

When a registrant interacts with the wish list environment, the registrant interacts to perform wish list modifications including functionality such as creation, editing and deletion. Editing may entail functions such as modifying registrant identification information, modifying event information, modifying wish list items, 5 modifying wish list recipients, etc. In a typical editing environment, the registrant will use a user terminal having an input device and a display to modify a list of gift items available from a variety of gift suppliers. The environment receives identification information that the user enters from the input device of his or her user terminal. A list 10 of gift item records that are correlated with the received identification information in the environment's registry database; if no items are found, a new list may be created. This list is displayed to the user via some presentation mechanism, typically the display of his or her user terminal. The registrant is then allowed to modify the list, and these 15 modifications are used to update the registry information in the registry database.

When a shopper interacts with the wish list environment, the shopper interacts 15 to purchase an item from a registrant's wish list. In a typical shopping environment, the shopper will use a user terminal having an input device and a display to display a list of gift items corresponding to a selected gift registry registrant, to select a gift item from the displayed list and to purchase the selected gift item from a gift supplier. A list 20 of gift item records that are correlated with the received identification information in the environment's registry database; if no items are found, new or corrected identification information may be submitted. This list is displayed to the shopper via some presentation mechanism, typically the display of his or her user terminal. The environment determines whether a purchase of an item on the located registry has 25 occurred and updates the registrant's registry in the registry database accordingly.

25 The determination that a purchase has occurred can proceed in several different ways. In one embodiment, the environment may receive gift item selection information from the shopper. The environment may attempt to execute the purchase of the selected item. If the purchase succeeds, then a purchase has occurred; otherwise, no purchase has occurred. In a further embodiment, the environment may attempt to 30 execute the purchase by acquiring payment information concerning the purchase, seeking purchase authorization for the purchase using the acquired payment

information and if purchase authorization is received, executing the purchase. The purchase authorization may occur through mechanism such as submitting credit card information to an authorization bureau, submitting the payment and item information directly to a supplier of the item, etc. In yet another embodiment, the determination as to whether a purchase has occurred will depend upon receiving notification from a supplier of the item purchased that the purchase has occurred. If such notification is received, then a purchase has occurred; otherwise, a purchase has not occurred.

The embodiments described above are given as illustrative examples only. It will be readily appreciated that many deviations may be made from the specific 10 embodiments disclosed in this specification without departing from the invention. Accordingly, the scope of the invention is to be determined by the claims below rather than being limited to the specifically described embodiments above.

What is claimed is:

1. A gift registry system comprising:
 - (a) at least one gift supplier computer associated with a plurality of gift suppliers, wherein each gift supplier computer is in communication with a gift item database of gift item records;
 - (b) a user terminal having an input device and a display, wherein the input device receives identification information for a registrant and selection information for a gift item record;
 - (c) a registry database system for storing registry records, each registry record correlating identification information for a selected registrant with at least one gift item record;
 - (d) at least one processor, in communication with the user terminal, the at least one gift supplier computer and the database registry system, for performing the steps comprising of:
 - (i) receiving the identification information from the input device of the user terminal;
 - (ii) generating a list of gift item records that are correlated with the received identification information in the registry database;
 - (iii) displaying the generated list of gift item records on the display of the user terminal;
 - (iv) determining whether a purchase has occurred with respect to a gift item record selected from the generated list; and
 - (v) upon determining that the purchase has occurred, updating the registry database system to reflect the purchase.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein the step of determining whether a purchase has occurred performs the following steps:
 - (A) receiving selection information corresponding to a selected gift item record in the generated list from the input device of the user terminal;
 - (B) attempting to execute the purchase of a gift item associated with the selected gift item record;

- (C) if the purchase is executed, determining that the purchase has occurred; and
- (D) if the purchase is not executed, determining that the purchase has not occurred.

3. The system of claim 2, wherein the step of attempting to execute the purchase of a gift item associated with the selected gift item record performs the following steps:

- (1) acquiring payment information concerning the purchase;
- (2) seeking purchase authorization for the purchase using the acquired payment information; and
- (3) if purchase authorization is received, executing the purchase.

4. The system of claim 3, wherein the step of seeking purchase authorization comprises submitting the acquired purchase information and the selected gift item record to a gift supplier computer associated with the selected gift item record.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein the step of determining whether a purchase has occurred performs the following steps:

- (A) receiving a notification concerning the purchase of a gift item associated with a gift item record selected from the generated list;
- (B) if the notification indicates a successful purchase, determining that the purchase has occurred; and
- (C) if the notification indicates an unsuccessful purchase, determining that the purchase has not occurred.

6. The system of claim 5, and further comprising the step of receiving selection information corresponding to a selected gift item record in the generated list from the input device of the user terminal.

7. The system of claim 6, and further comprising the step of guiding the user via the user terminal to a Web destination associated with a gift supplier indicated by the selected gift item record.
8. The system of claim 5, wherein the notification concerning the purchase of a gift item is received from the user via the user terminal.
9. The system of claim 5, wherein the notification concerning the purchase of a gift item is received from a gift supplier indicated by the selected gift item record.
10. A gift registry system allowing an end user utilizing a user terminal having an input device and a display to display a list of gift items corresponding to a selected gift registry registrant, to select a gift item from the displayed list and to purchase the selected gift item from a gift supplier, comprising:
 - (a) a registry database system for storing registry records, each registry record correlating identification information for a selected registrant with at least one gift item record; and
 - (b) at least one processor, in communication with a user terminal, at least one gift supplier computer providing gift item records associated with a plurality of gift suppliers and the database registry system, for performing the steps comprising of:
 - (i) receiving identification information from an input device of a user terminal;
 - (ii) generating a list of gift item records that are correlated with the received identification information in the registry database;
 - (iii) displaying the generated list of gift item records on a display of the user terminal;
 - (iv) determining whether a purchase has occurred with respect to a gift item record selected from the generated list; and
 - (v) upon determining that the purchase has occurred, updating the registry database system to reflect the purchase.
11. The system of claim 10, wherein the step of determining whether a purchase has occurred performs the following steps:

- (A) receiving selection information corresponding to a selected gift item record in the generated list from the input device of the user terminal;
- (B) attempting to execute the purchase of a gift item associated with the selected gift item record;
- (C) if the purchase is executed, determining that the purchase has occurred; and
- (D) if the purchase is not executed, determining that the purchase has not occurred.

12. The system of claim 11, wherein the step of attempting to execute the purchase of a gift item associated with the selected gift item record performs the following steps:

- (1) acquiring payment information concerning the purchase;
- (2) seeking purchase authorization for the purchase using the acquired payment information; and
- (3) if purchase authorization is received, executing the purchase.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein the step of seeking purchase authorization comprises submitting the acquired purchase information and the selected gift item record to a gift supplier computer associated with the selected gift item record.

14. The system of claim 10, wherein the step of determining whether a purchase has occurred performs the following steps:

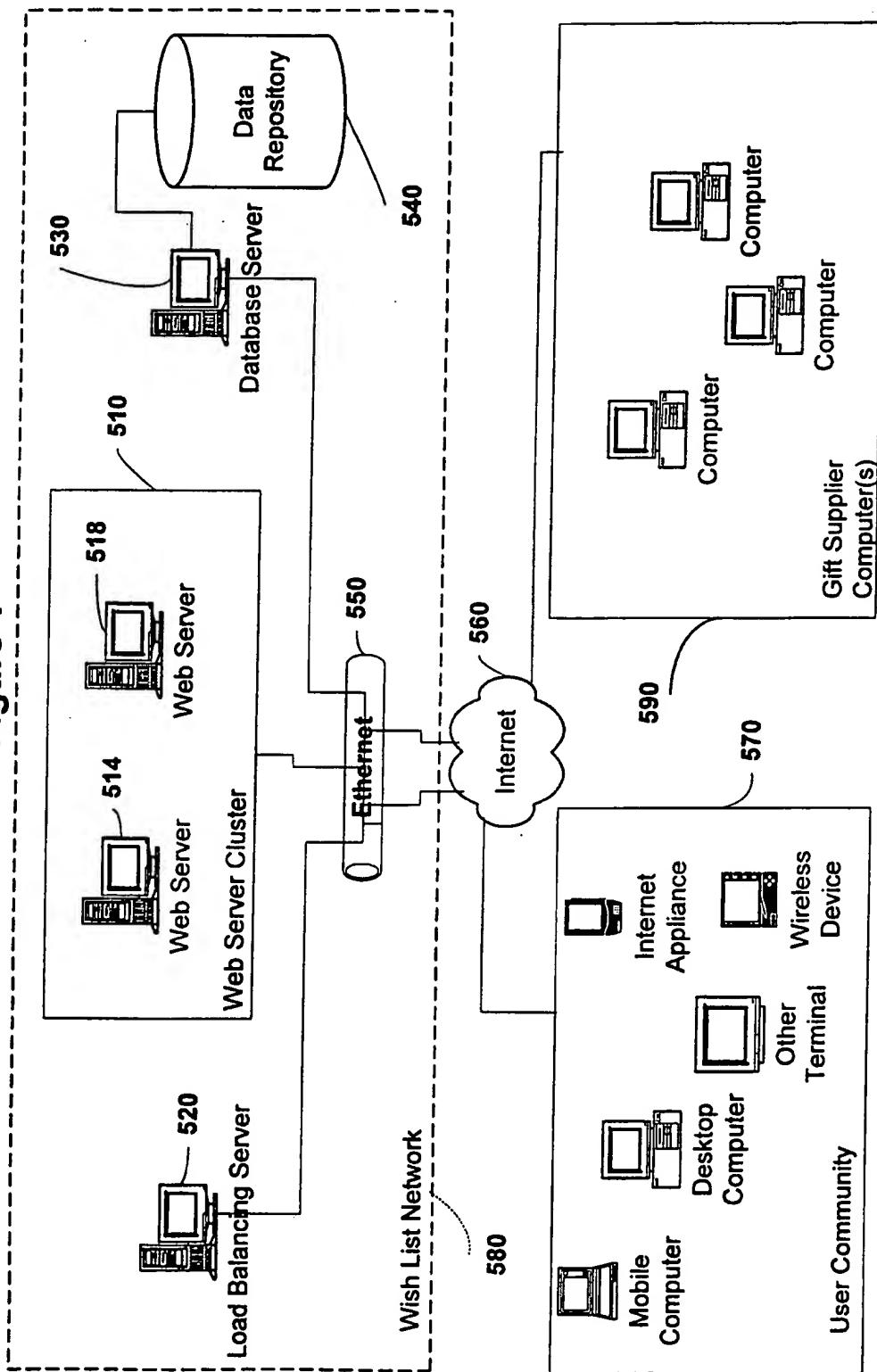
- (A) receiving a notification concerning the purchase of a gift item associated with a gift item record selected from the generated list;
- (B) if the notification indicates a successful purchase, determining that the purchase has occurred; and
- (C) if the notification indicates an unsuccessful purchase, determining that the purchase has not occurred.

15. The system of claim 14, and further comprising the step of receiving selection information corresponding to a selected gift item record in the generated list from the input device of the user terminal.
16. The system of claim 15, and further comprising the step of guiding the user via the user terminal to a Web destination associated with a gift supplier indicated by the selected gift item record.
17. The system of claim 14, wherein the notification concerning the purchase of a gift item is received from the user via the user terminal.
18. The system of claim 14, wherein the notification concerning the purchase of a gift item is received from a gift supplier indicated by the selected gift item record.
19. A gift registry system allowing an end user utilizing a user terminal having an input device and a display to modify a list of gift items available from a plurality of gift suppliers as an on-line gift registry registrant, comprising:
 - (a) a registry database system for storing registry records, each registry record correlating identification information for a selected registrant with at least one gift item record; and
 - (b) at least one processor, in communication with a user terminal, at least one gift supplier computer providing gift item records associated with a plurality of gift suppliers and the database registry system, for performing the steps comprising of:
 - (i) receiving identification information from an input device of a user terminal;
 - (ii) generating a list of gift item records that are correlated with the received identification information in the registry database;
 - (iii) displaying the generated list of gift item records on a display of the user terminal;
 - (iv) modifying the generated list according to instructions received from the user terminal; and
 - (v) upon determining that a modification has occurred, updating the registry database system to reflect the purchase.

20. The system of claim 19 wherein the processor performs the further step of receiving function information from an input device of the user terminal.
21. The system of claim 20 wherein the function information is selected from the group consisting of: delete list, edit list, and create list.
22. A gift registry method allowing an end user utilizing a user terminal having an input device and a display to display a list of gift items corresponding to a selected gift registry registrant, to select a gift item from the displayed list and to purchase the selected gift item from a gift supplier, comprising the steps of:
 - (a) receiving identification information from an input device of a user terminal;
 - (b) generating a list of gift item records that are correlated with the received identification information in a registry database, wherein each gift item record is supplied by at least one gift supplier computer associated with a plurality of gift suppliers;
 - (c) displaying the generated list of gift item records on a display of the user terminal;
 - (d) determining whether a purchase has occurred with respect to a gift item record selected from the generated list; and
 - (e) upon determining that the purchase has occurred, updating the registry database system to reflect the purchase.
23. A gift registry method allowing an end user utilizing a user terminal having an input device and a display to modify a list of gift items available from a plurality of gift suppliers as an on-line gift registry registrant, comprising:
 - (a) receiving identification information from an input device of a user terminal;
 - (b) generating a list of gift item records that are correlated with the received identification information in the registry database, wherein each gift item record is supplied by at least one gift supplier computer associated with a plurality of gift suppliers;
 - (c) displaying the generated list of gift item records on a display of the user terminal;

- (d) modifying the generated list according to instructions received from the user terminal; and
- (e) upon determining that a modification has occurred, updating the registry database system to reflect the purchase.

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Figure 1

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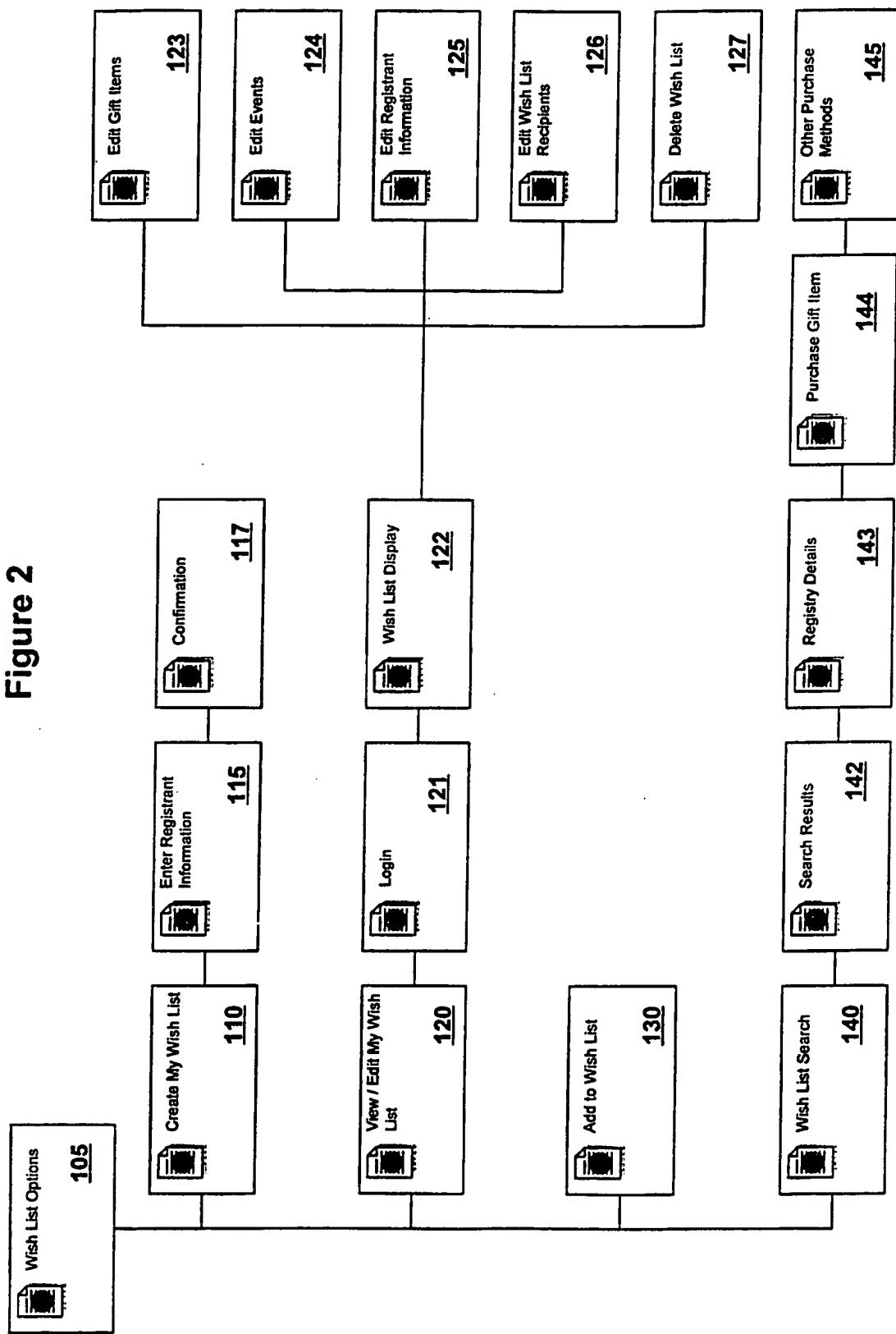
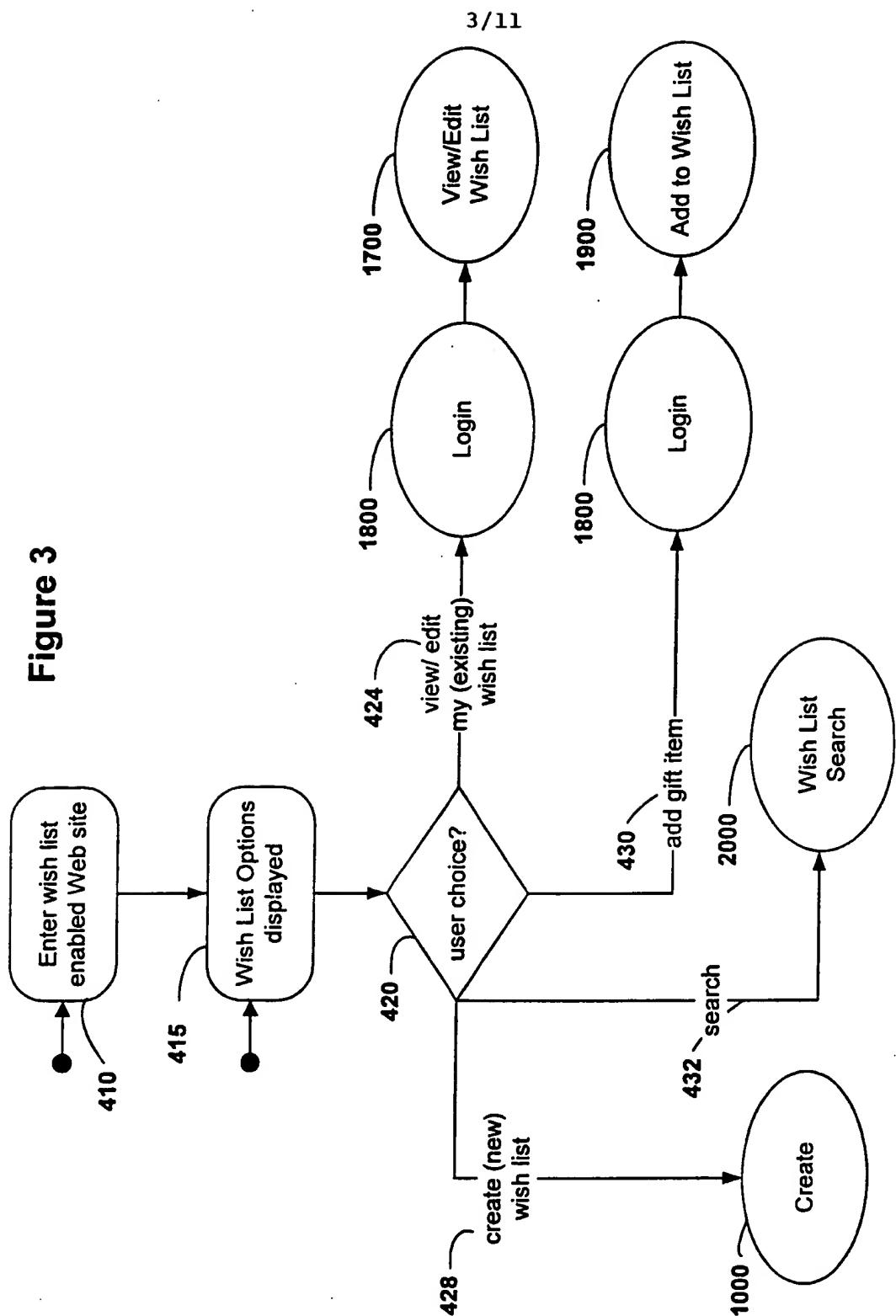
Figure 2

Figure 3

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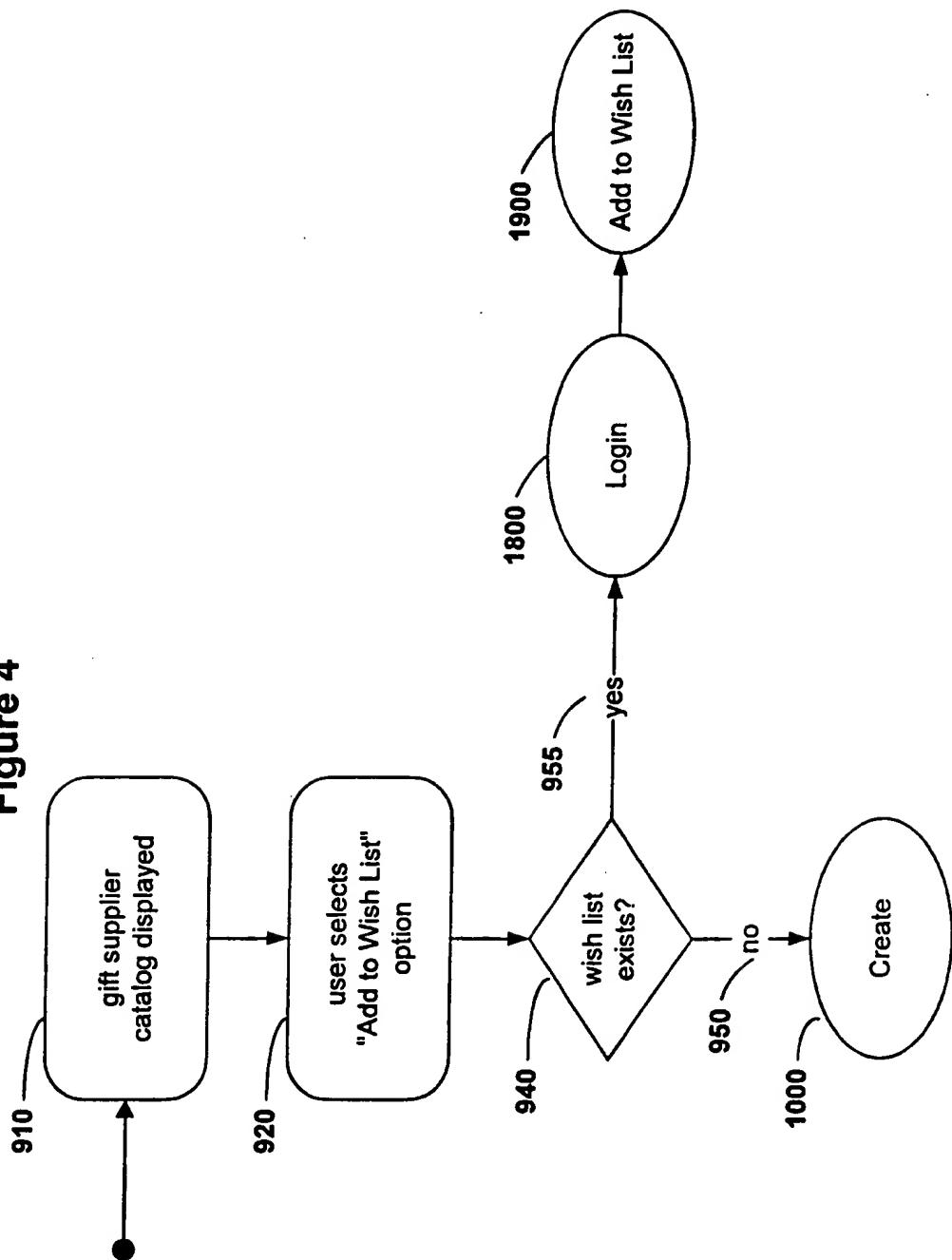
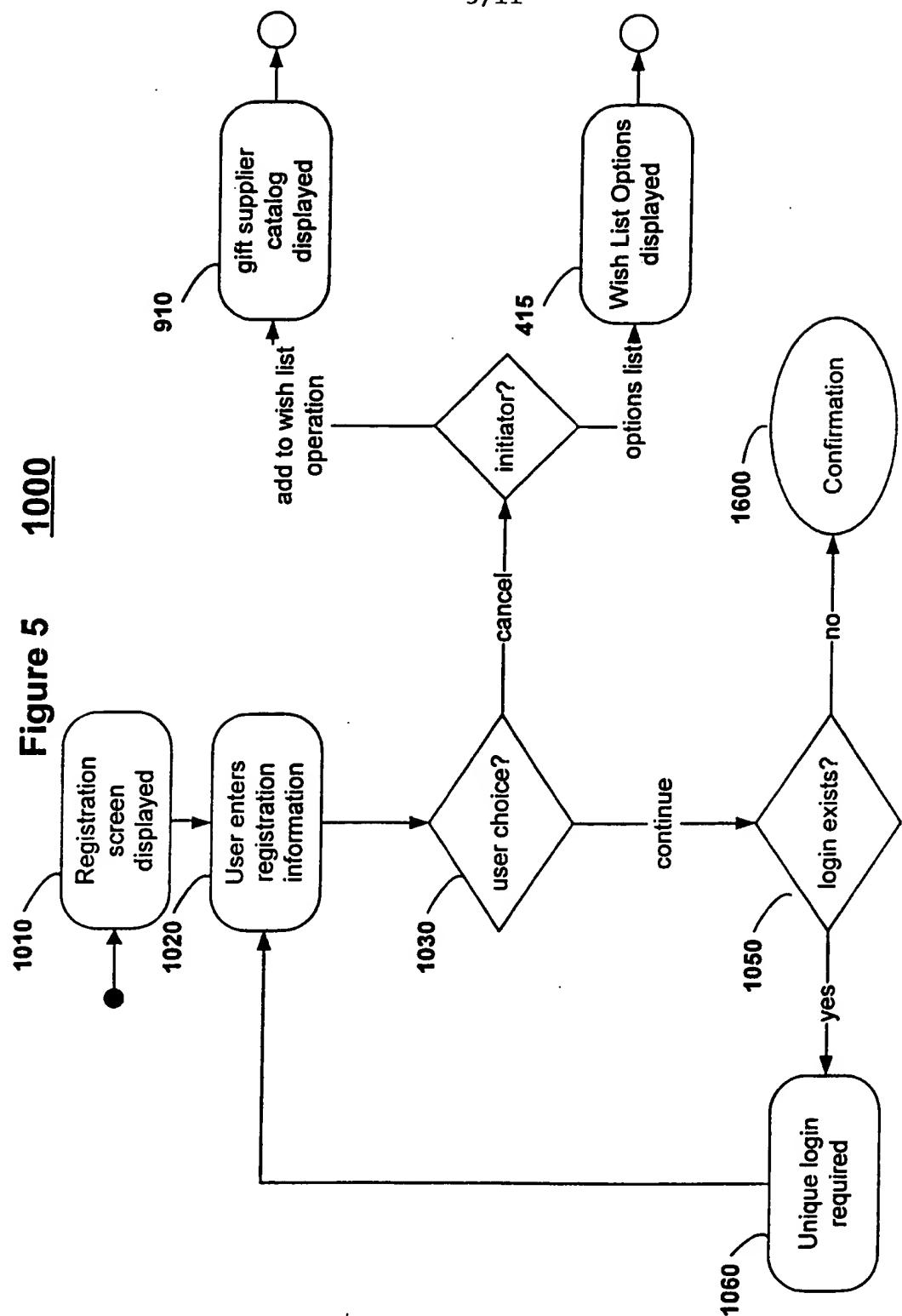
Figure 4

Figure 5
1000

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6/11

Figure 6

1600

1610 Confirmation displayed

1630 insert registration data into database

1660 email wish list recipients

1665 initiator?

1670 options list

1680 gift supplier catalog displayed

1900 Add to Wish List

415 options list

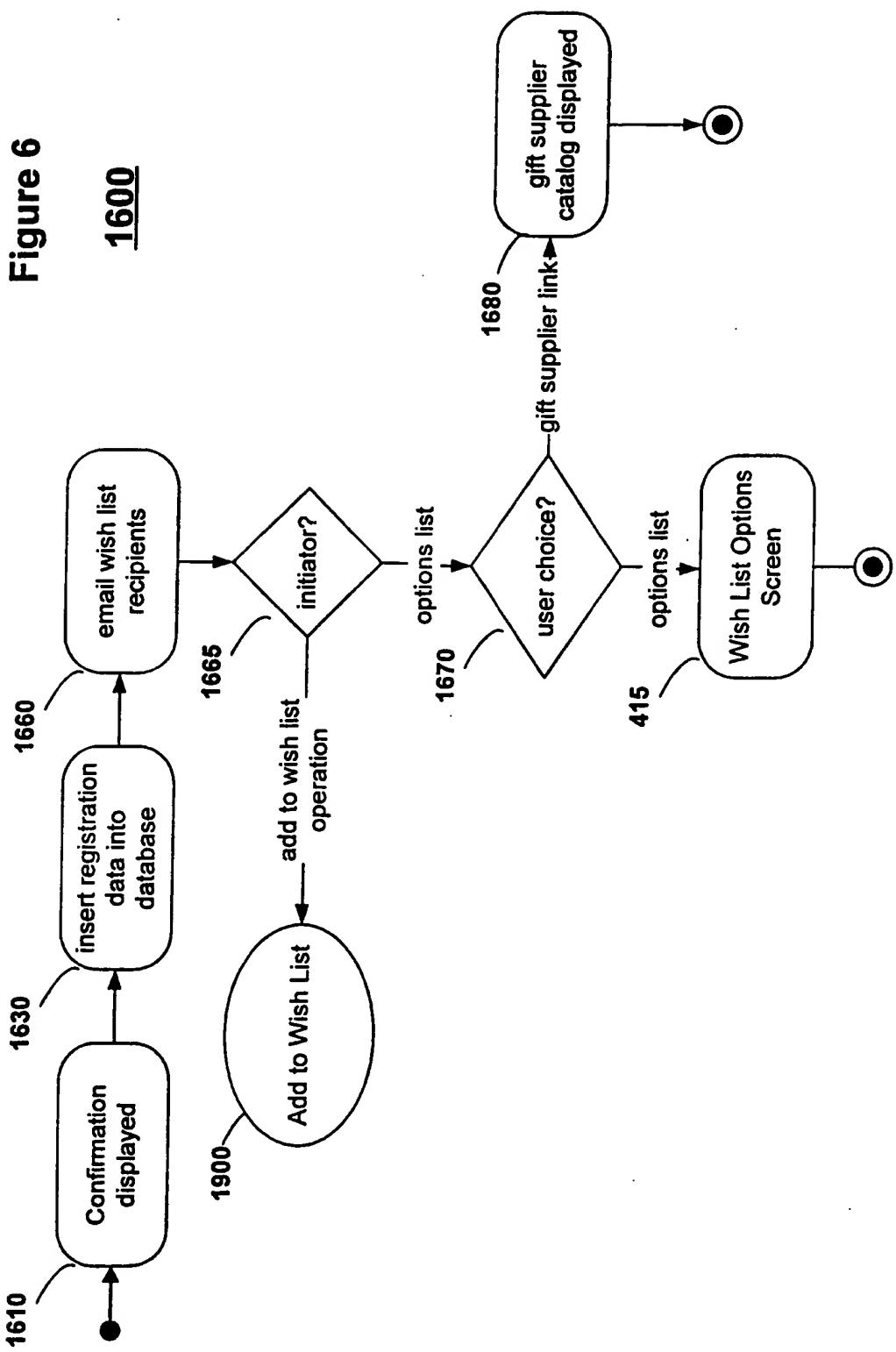
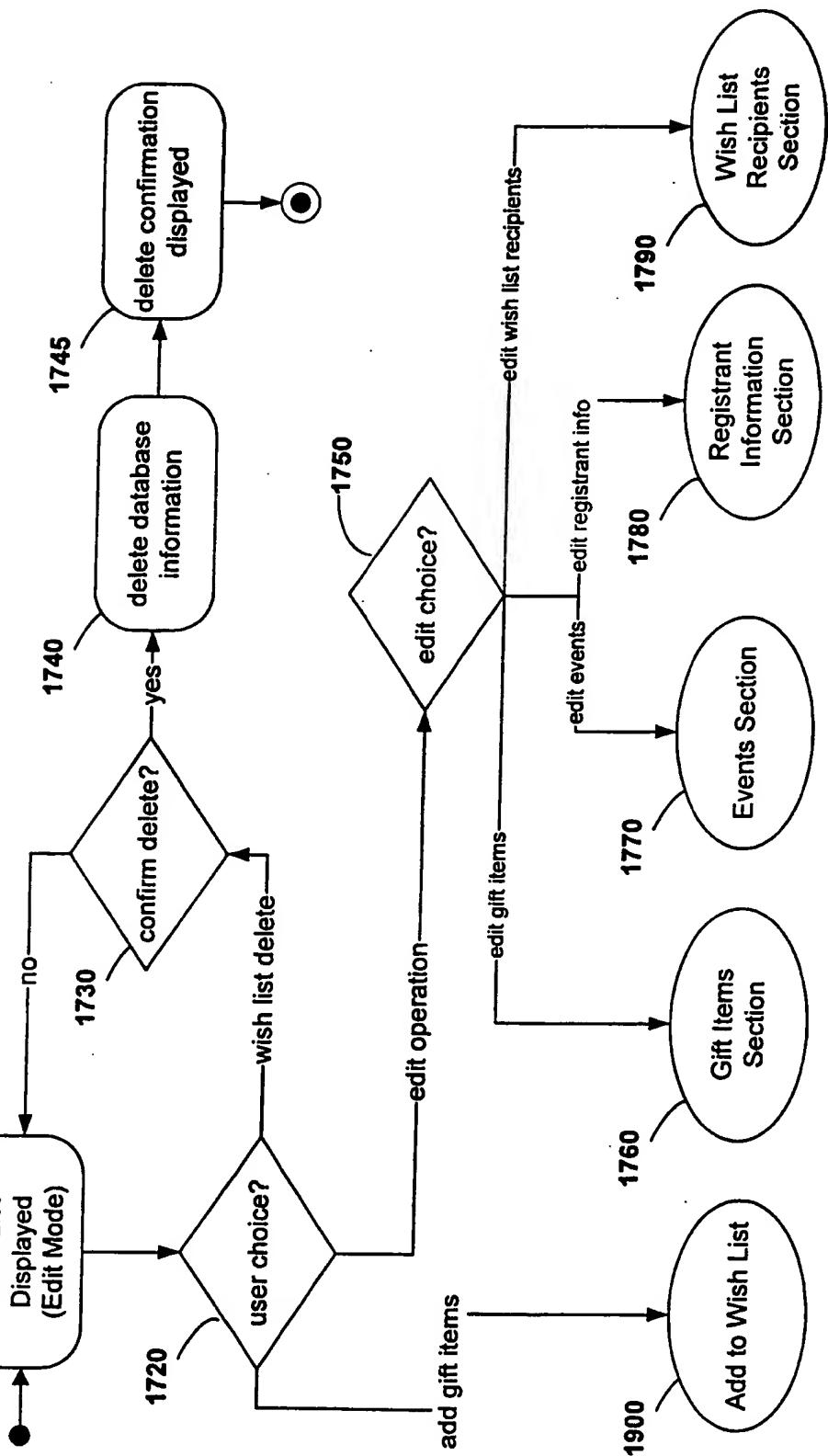
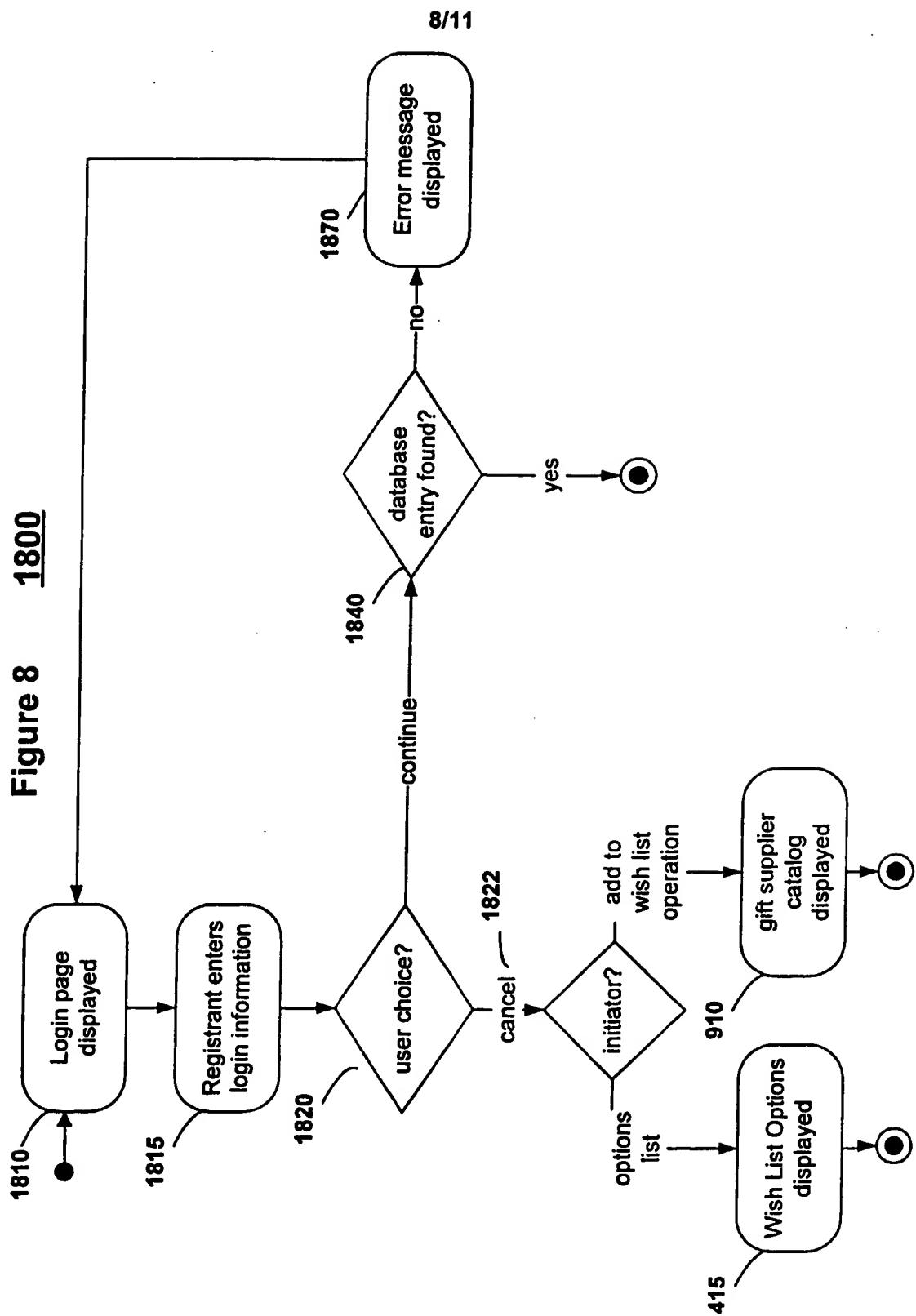


Figure 7 1700





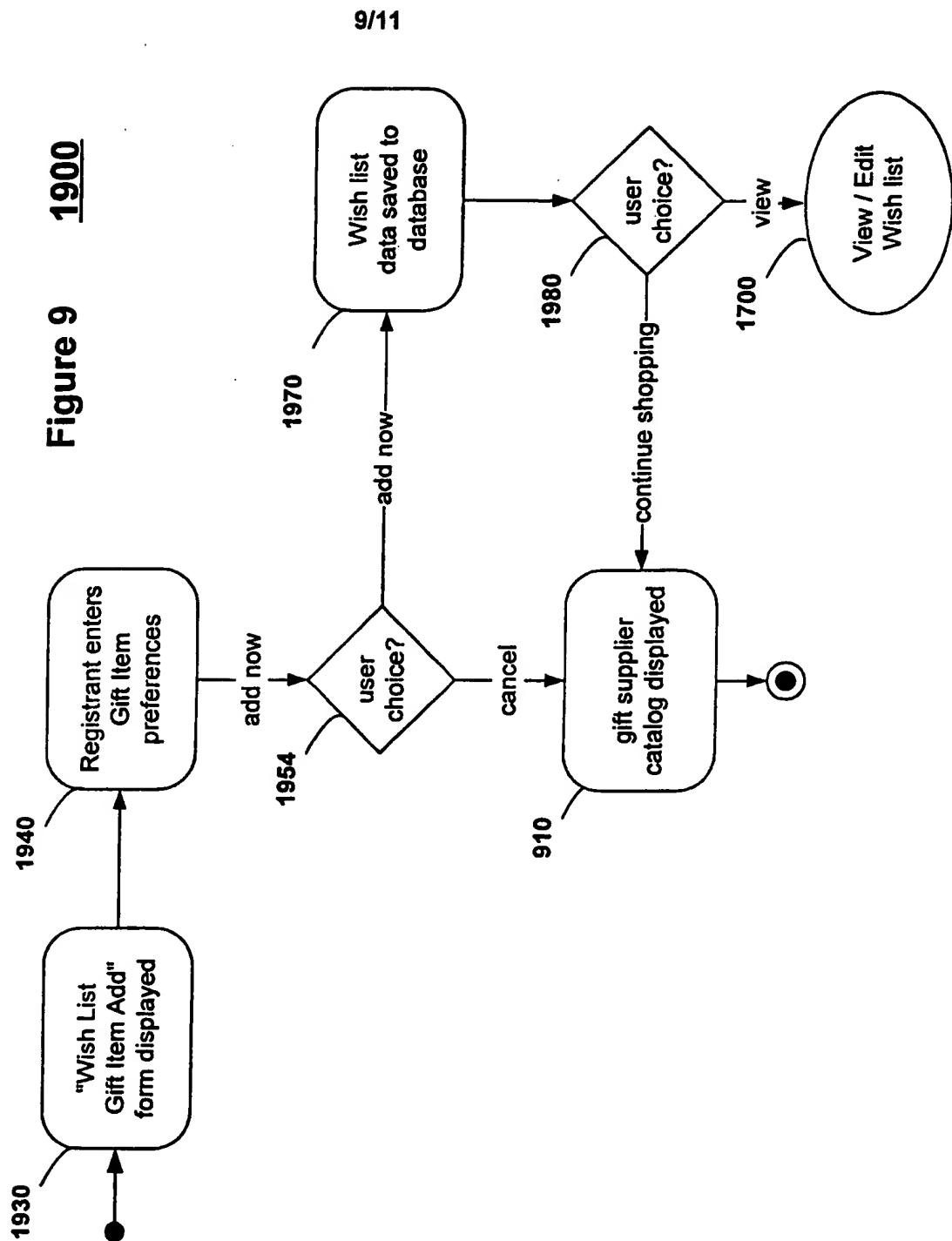
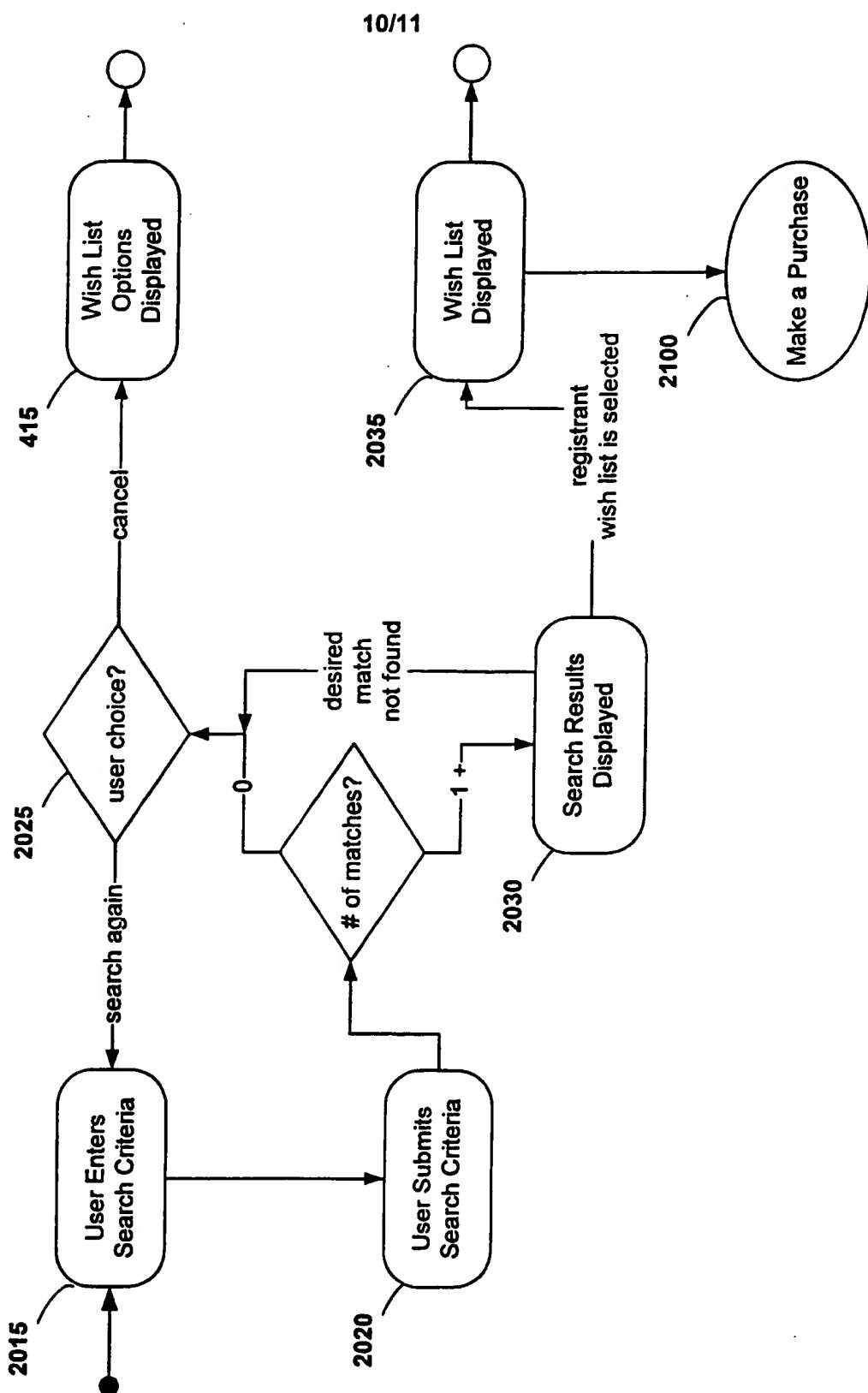
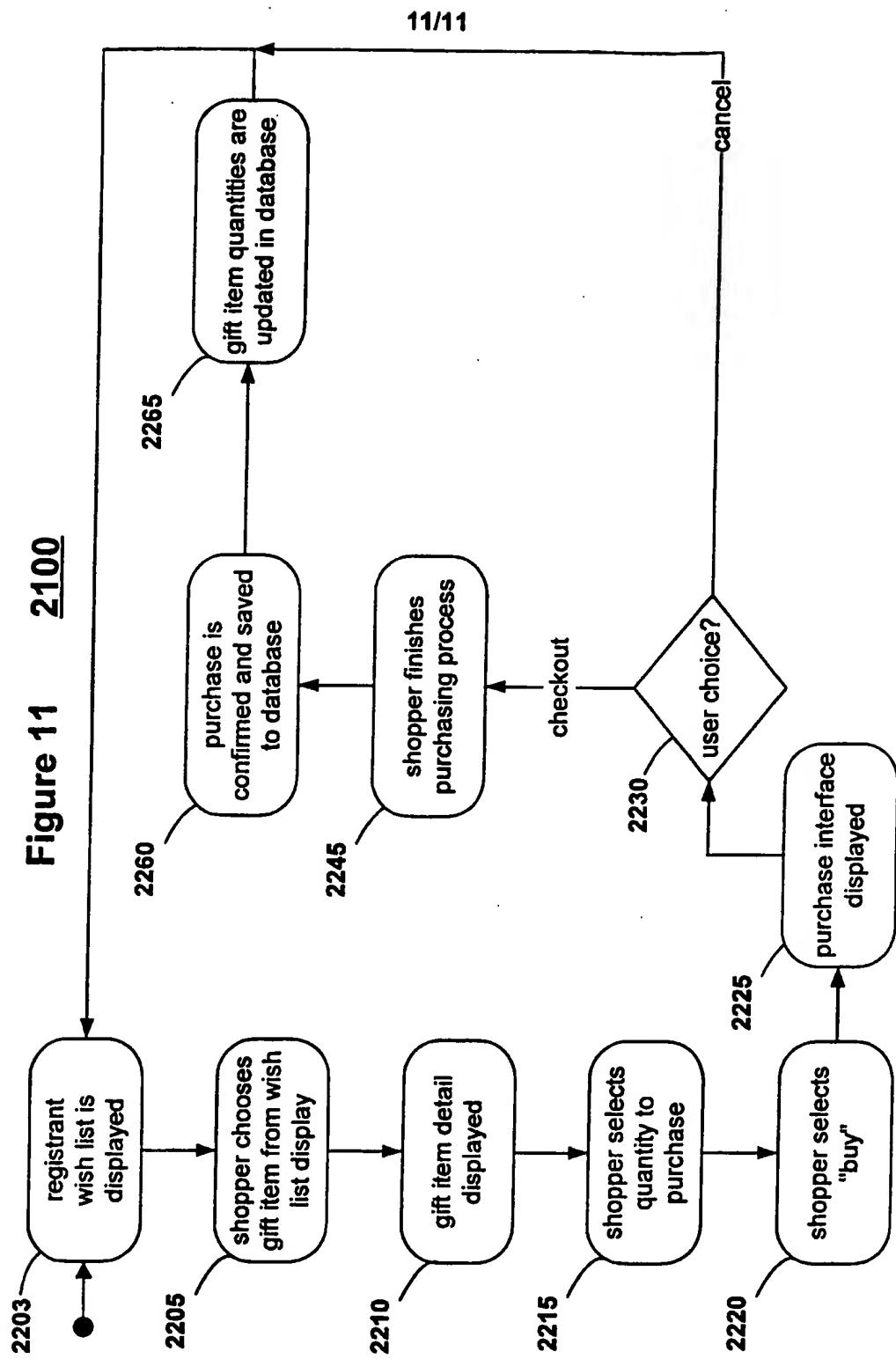


Figure 10 2000



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US99/31227

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(7) :: GO6P 17/60

US CL : 705/26

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

U.S. : 705/26, 705/1; 705/22; 705/23; 705/27; 705/28; 235/380

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

STN, DIALOG, NEXIS, DR. LINK

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 5,754,981 A [VEENEMAN et al] 19 May 1998, Abstract, fig 1-3, 5-6, 8-11, column 1, lines 34-36, column 3, lines 47-55, column 55-57, column 14, lines 66-67, column 2, lines 7-10, lines 28-30	1, 2, 5, 6, 8-11, 14, 15, 17- 23
Y		-----
A		3,4,12,13
Y,P	US 5,937,391 A [IKEDA et al] 10 August 1999, Abstract, fig 1, 5, 11	7, 16 3,4,12,13

<input type="checkbox"/>	Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.	<input type="checkbox"/>	See patent family annex.
A	Special categories of cited documents:	"T"	later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
"A"	document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance	"X"	document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
"B"	earlier document published on or after the international filing date	"Y"	document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
"L"	document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)	"&"	document member of the same patent family
"O"	document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means		
"P"	document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed		

Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
06 MARCH 2000	05 APR 2000
Name and mailing address of the ISA/US Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks Box PCT Washington, D.C. 20231 Facsimile No. (703) 305-3230	Authorized officer JAMES TRAMMEL Telephone No. (703) 305-9768 